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## EDITORIAL

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The importance of developing in the pupils of our public schools the power and habit of speaking correctly, accurately, and effectively is doubted by no one. Equally well known is the difficulty of achieving this objective. Mere correctness is hard to secure because of the constant bad example to which most American young people are subjected—in school and out. Genuine accuracy and effectiveness of expression are almost unattainable in the face of the natural carelessness of the ordinary individual and the indifference generally prevalent in business and society.

### Turning the Tide

Any device, then, for removing or overcoming these obstacles to progress in this direction should receive every teacher's careful, friendly consideration. American Speech Week (November 6-12) is clearly such a device. Its purpose is to arouse in the individual pupil and in the community of which he is a part a genuine interest in better speech. So far as it succeeds in this attempt it stirs the pupil to make a real effort for better expression and at the same time it so improves his language environment as to greatly reduce the hindrances to his efforts. Teachers who have used the plan in former years testify that it does attain a large measure of success in both directions.

Those who have objected to Speech Week, or have at least disregarded it, have done so because they thought of it as a spasm of virtue to be succeeded by an even more reckless debauch of slovenliness in speaking. As now generally observed, the week is not that at all, but an integral part—usually the launching—of a year-around campaign for improvement in the oral language of the community. The suggestions furnished by the American Speech Committee of the National Council (see "News and Notes" in this *Journal*) lead to this sort of observance. Such a conception of the undertaking seems to remove the last reason for hesitation.

He who is to be an efficient teacher of composition, and yet more he who is to succeed in bringing heedless young people and great literature into vital contact, must keep himself sympathetic with youth and acquainted with the social and industrial life of his own day. He should have had a good training in classic literature and should have tastes which will lead him constantly to enlarge his knowledge of the great writings of the near and of the remote past. He should have sufficient grasp of educational theory to choose his methods intelligently. But these are not in themselves sufficient.

**The Human  
Touch**

Daily play is an essential to the greatest success in teaching, especially in teaching English. And much of it at least must be non-literary and *social* in character. The only sure way to know human nature and respond directly to the feelings as well as the ideas of one's pupils is to live a normal human life among people. That observers should be able to single us out because we have the appearance and bearing of recluses is unfortunate for us and equally so for our pupils. Better a little less preparation of the daily lessons or a few more papers passed without minute scrutiny than that the teacher should become a manikin.

Part of the teacher's reading, too, should be in and of the present world. Whether or not *Main Street* and *Moon Calf* have literary value, the wide-awake teacher must read them and many of their kind. They are attempts to mirror and interpret the life of today in this country, and they are objects of interest to a very large portion of the people. Popular reaction to them is almost as instructive as the books themselves. The busiest and poorest-paid teacher cannot afford to ignore current fiction even if he must club with others to raise the price of two or three of the best sellers.